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Jenkins, Andrew - Redistribution TAS - Submission on the proposed Tasmanian redistribution (feedback)

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Submission on the proposed Tasmanian redistribution details

Category: Names
Details: Federal electorate of Franklin to Tongerlongeter,

Objection to the Proposed Renaming of the Federal Electorate of Franklin

Submitted by: Andrew Jenkins

To the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC),

I am writing to formally lodge my objection to the proposal to rename the federal electorate of Franklin to "Tongerlongeter." It is my strong view that the existing name, Franklin, should be retained. While I acknowledge the AEC's intent to review electoral boundaries and naming conventions, the selection of Tongerlongeter is deeply problematic. If the AEC deems a name change absolutely necessary, far more appropriate, unifying, and less divisive alternatives must be considered.

My objection is based on the following three grounds:

1. Historical Significance Alone Does Not Justify Electorate Renaming

While I acknowledge the historical role of Tongerlongeter as a notable Aboriginal resistance leader during the Black War in Tasmania during the 1820s and 1830s, historical significance alone should not dictate the naming of a federal division. Electorate names represent all constituents within a geographic boundary. There are numerous other, more appropriate avenues for recognizing Tongerlongeter's place in Tasmanian history—such as through monuments, educational curricula, or geographical landmarks—without imposing the name on a federal electorate.

2. Historical Association with Violence and the Need for Consistency

According to the definitive historical account, *Tongerlongeter: First Nations Leader and Tasmanian War Hero* by Henry Reynolds and Nicholas Clements, the historical record explicitly attributes acts of severe violence, torture, and the killing of non-combatant civilians—including women and children—to Tongerlongeter and his followers.

By contemporary standards, these actions would be classified as war crimes. The AEC must maintain consistency in its naming principles. When the Victorian electorate of Batman was renamed to Cooper, it was largely due to John Batman's association with frontier violence. If the AEC is committed to avoiding names associated with historical atrocities, it must apply that standard equally here. Naming an electorate after a figure associated with the targeted killing of civilians sets a troubling precedent.

3. Community Division and Counterproductive Outcomes

The primary objective of any public renaming process should be to foster unity and reconciliation. The proposed name of Tongerlongeter fails this test. Rather than advancing reconciliation, it has already proven to be highly controversial and risks deeply polarizing the local community. Furthermore, the AEC must remain an impartial body; adopting this name risks the perception that the Commission is taking sides in highly charged historical and contemporary political debates.

It is also worth noting that the complexity and spelling of the name have already attracted widespread ridicule on social media. This undermines the dignity that should be afforded to a federal division and suggests the name lacks broad community acceptance.

Conclusion and Alternative Recommendations

For the reasons outlined above, I strongly urge the AEC to **retain the name of Franklin**.

However, if the Commission determines that a change is unavoidable, I request that you reject "Tongerlongeter" and instead consider alternative names that command broad, unifying community support. Appropriate alternatives honoring prominent, modern Tasmanians who made peaceful contributions to our society include:

- **Reece** (Honoring Eric Reece, former Premier of Tasmania)
- **Goodluck** (Honoring Bruce Goodluck, long-serving Member for Franklin)
- **Goodwin** (Honoring Vanessa Goodwin, respected former Tasmanian Attorney-General)
- **Harradine** (Honoring Brian Harradine, historic and influential Tasmanian Senator)

Thank you for considering this submission.

Sincerely,

Andrew Jenkins